

Transcript – Class of 1991 25th Reunion

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Interviewer: Whitney Pape

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Track 1

Whitney Pape: So it is May 28, 2016. We're here in Pembroke Hall, Brown University campus. And my name's Whitney Pape. I'm the interim Pembroke archivist, and I'm here with members of the class of 1991 for their twenty-fifth reunion. Ladies?

Interviewees: Hello.

WP: Name?

Triane Chang: Hi, my name's Triane Chang, Class of '91. I was an IR and Comp. Lit. major here at Brown.

Chris Valeo: I'm Chris Valeo, Class of '91. I was English major while I was here at Brown, and I came to Brown from Los Angeles, and when I came to campus in the fall of 1987, I was following in the footsteps of my father, who was Class of '63, and who spent most of that weekend dropping me off saying, "Oh, when I lived here," "Oh, when I went here." (laughter) Which was delightful, and 25 years later, this morning I called him and said, "Dad, I'm walking through Wriston." "Oh, when I lived here –" (laughter)

Grateful for that continuity. [00:01:00] My little brother followed me three years later, and what I think is tremendous about Brown is that – not that you've asked yet, but it was the perfect school for each of the three of us, and we could not be more different. So my dad was delighted that we were at his alma mater, but I never would have attended the Brown that he

chose in 1959, and it was a totally different school for me, and a totally different opportunity for my brother, so happy to be back.

Sharon Besser: My name is Sharon Besser, of course from Class of '91. At Brown, I was an Ed. Studies major, and we're not talking about the rest of our public, just in –

WP: Go ahead.

SB: Go further, what we're actually doing now?

WP: Say what you wanted to say.

SB: And now, I'm a Professor of Education at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin, and I've worked on teacher prep programs. And my mother was from Pembroke, and Class of '65. And, so yes, long family history here.

Prudence Carter: I'm Prudence Carter, Class of '91. This is my first time back to campus [00:02:00] in 14 years. So, I was – I'm from Mississippi. This was a foreign land for me when I arrived here 25 years ago – more than 25 years ago, what's that? 29 years ago. I was an Applied Mathematics and Economics major – don't ask me how I got to where I am today, but I'm now an educational scholar, sociologist, particularly of education and I currently work at Stanford University, and I'm on my way to the University of California Berkeley as dean in the School of Education.

Pamela Bass: Pamela Bass, Class of '91 as well, and like Chris, I actually came to Brown, and my sister was here five years earlier, graduated in the Class of '86, and there's no question if anything held me from Brown, it was going to be that I saw myself so different from my sister, but definitely learned Brown was my Brown, and she had her version of Brown [00:03:00] as well. It was the perfect place for me, to call home, and from Brown, I had a 20-year career in terms of college athletics, and have recently made the move now to the law.

WP: Welcome everybody. Maybe you could all start by talking about what went into your decision to study at Brown. We've heard a little bit about maybe why you thought you might not study at Brown, but you know, how did you hear about Brown, what did you think when you came to visit?

PB: I can say the easiest thing was when I came, did my tour of colleges across the country, the summer before our senior year, I came to Brown, and it was the one school where everybody said hello, when you walked down the street, and there was very much of the, friendly community atmosphere and that made all the difference to me.

PC: Well I had never heard of Brown. It just, it was a random thing. I was at a summer program after my junior year of high school, and [00:04:00] I was at a six-week summer session at Phillip's Andover Academy, and all of the kids were talking about this great university called Brown, which at that time, I thought it was named after a color, and I was like, "Okay," and they're like, "You have to go on this trip. We're going on a summer trip to Brown." So when I finally tried to get a ticket, it was sold out, because it was so popular. But fast-forward a couple months later, and after the PSATs and all the college catalogs are coming through, it comes into my mailbox, my parents' home, and I had no idea where I was going to college, and I randomly applied, and 25 years later, here I am as an alumna, but it was a wild ride. I would say a teacher probably put me on the path to the introduction of Brown, and then those students of mine that summer, those friends of mine that summer, really, they raved about it. I came to visit this place, and I fell in love immediately. I was supposed to go to Amherst the same weekend, admit weekend, or that time when we would come and visit, and I ended up like [00:05:00] dropping the Amherst trip just to stay here a little longer, because it was just that vibrant and engaging. I fell in love immediately, so it was definitely the place for me.

SB: I came actually, from my mother as well, but also, I was a rower; I was on the crew team here, and I had rowed in high school. And so, at that time, there wasn't heavy recruiting, a rower. So I was a little of an anomaly that I was – but I knew enough to contact the coach, so I wanted to kind of meet him, and see kind of the boathouse, and I got to stay overnight. And do you remember, I stayed in [Narley?] House. So [Narley?] House has been torn down now. (laughs)

F: It's a parking lot.

SB: And there were a bunch of rowers that lived there that I got to stay with, and I just absolutely fell in love with the place, I loved these women that I met who were just amazing, and it was just an instant sense of being a place you can be a part of. And that it would be different from my high school sort of thing that wasn't [00:06:00] that, you know, positive that this is going to be like a haven for me.

My dad had kept in touch with Dave Zucconi, who was at Brown about the same time that Dad had been, but was currently the Executive Director of the Sports Foundation, and he became a really important to person in my time here. But I met with him on our regular college tour. The prep squad team in Los Angeles did a regular spring and junior year trip; they were really facilitating east coast college application. And so when we stopped at Brown, I met with Dave Zucconi. And that gave me a reason to do something away from the crowd. And so when I left my meeting with Dave, I headed back towards main campus by myself, and it was already my campus. Like, I wasn't – I hadn't applied, I wasn't in, you know? But wow, the sense of home, the sense that I would live here, not just learn here, was already very powerful. So I applied early, and was admitted, and pretty much never looked back, never thought twice. Glad I didn't. [00:07:00]

TC: I was living overseas at the time; I had never been here. (laughter) So, it was kind of the college equivalent of a blind date. (laughter) I knew a little about the university; I applied to seven or eight, got into, I think, all except for one, and then was looking at the options, but I was living at Jakarta, Indonesia at the time at the International School. I think there was one guy I vaguely know who was two classes ahead of me who ended up here, but it was just a dot on a map to me.

So, I ended up, as I mentioned, a Comp. Lit. and an IR major here, and I think that there's something very real about the way people express themselves and articulate themselves in the materials. And so I spent a fair amount of time in my high school library in Indonesia, for many reasons, including it was air-conditioned. (laughter) And reading about colleges, and sort of

thinking about that. So, I narrowed it down, and ended up I think making absolutely the right choice for me, but it was sight unseen.

WP: How quickly did you know it was going to be okay?

TC: [00:08:00] I frankly, had a bit of culture shock coming back into the US, so I hadn't lived here since I, really for six or seven years. There is a bit of that, but I liked the independence of the place; I liked how everybody was just free to be who they were, and I think I knew within the first year.

WP: I can't tell you how many people mentioned that feeling of "home," like on their first visit. So there is something about the place that just sort of connects with certain people.

CV: When I mentor students now about college selection, because I'm also a university professor now, but when I mentor students about college choice, and/or about either recruits to my college, or people thinking about graduate programs, I sort of say, like you can read all you want, but if you can see the place, you need to live there. Like, it's going to be your place, not just your school. It's very different from, you know, if you attended day school now, you can go home at night. So I encourage people to listen to that visceral piece. [00:09:00]

PC: Well, I think the thing that I discovered about Brown, for two years I did admissions work for Brown; I was an admissions officer here after I left, or graduated. And the one thing I would always say to students across the country is, this was one of the few universities, R1s that's really dedicated to the undergraduate experience to the extent. You know, many of the more elite universities are dedicated, but the graduate experience kind of supersedes because of the research dollars and such. But Brown is known for being a place for the undergraduate experience. And in fact, I would have to feel sorry for the graduate students, because I knew that it was a disproportionate amount of attention to the undergraduate experience. And the programs, the deans, wonderful deans I remember having here, and still have relationships with those people after 25 years, I think that's the thing that helped create the home kind of feel in some ways. And so, I always felt like [00:10:00] I was learning as much outside of the classroom as I was inside

of the classroom, because all of the different things in the context kind of eat those at Brown, just solid, very solid for me.

PB: It's actually funny you say that, because right outside of Meeting Street, I can remember the day my parents left when I was a freshman to drop me off. My dad pulled me aside and said, "Listen, you're going to learn more outside the classroom at Brown than you are in the classroom," I didn't really understand what that meant until I was here for a couple of years, and I was like, "Oh, I get it. He was absolutely right."

And the students at Brown sell Brown – when I was here as an assistant coach doing recruiting for the women's basketball program, it was important, when prospective students came to campus not to spend time with us as coaches. We wouldn't spend time with the students because the students sell that independence that you mentioned earlier, and they sell just like the creative things they're able to do which make this so unique [00:11:00] and make it home for the students that are here.

PC: Have you ever met an unhappy Brown alum, someone who didn't like Brown?

CV: I suppose they don't come back, or they don't identify –

PC: Or even out in the world, like even now, because the network is vast, right? So not necessarily here on campus, but in your life, and every Brown alumnus or alumni I've met has really loved this place. I mean, we all have variable experiences. I don't want to romanticize or idealize, because there are some institutional things that we can get into, but I will say –

CV: There are and there were, yeah.

PC: Yeah, there are and there were, but most people on the whole whom I've met from all over the world seem to have really thrived here, in some way.

WP: It would be interesting to know what those statistics are on people transferring out of Brown.

PC: That's a good – yeah, the attrition rate. I mean not everyone, obviously. I want to be careful [00:12:00] about that, but never met someone who graduated here who didn't like it.

CV: So, I'm remembering that investment in undergraduate education. When we arrived, they were doing something, some first-year experience, which was funny because I'm on a committee now to try to create a first-year experience at my college, you know, almost 30 years later. So Brown was cutting edge. But my – the fall of '87, I had an archaeology class with Martha Joukowsky, and 20-some other students. I mean, oh hello, it's this person who's in the process of discovering Troy. (laughter) The things that were handed to us by way of that undergraduate investment, I mean, it was really – I mean, I didn't end up staying in archaeology, or even necessarily staying in touch with Dr. Joukowsky, but wow, what a profound way to welcome me to campus as a brand new undergrad.

PB: My freshman seminar-type class was right in this room, and it was Sport and Society with Arlene [00:13:00] Gorton.

CV: Oh my gosh, she was amazing too.

PB: And, she was, and it was her leadership in terms of women's athletics at Brown, and then her ability to share that with all of us, and just that you could study sports, and be part of sports, and how does it reflect society at Brown? So, those were great classes.

CV: And a female athletic director in those days was not a typical personnel choice. So, I mean, and she was even interim athletic director at the time, right?

PB: She was interim between –

CV: She was assistant always, but then she was interim between two –

PB: Correct, it was actually interesting. And it goes back to I believe part of the history with Pembroke. At one point, and I don't know if she was the athletic director, but when you have the merging in the 70s of the athletic program, men's and women's, is when she was an assistant, but I don't remember her role earlier. But she was a leader, I mean she started the Pandas with our ice hockey program.

WP: Did you all feel [00:14:00] academically prepared for Brown?

PC: Brown kicked my butt the first year. I mean, I went to a high school, in fact, I was just talking to another young woman from the south, you know. I thrived in high school. I was at the top of my class, did well on the test, but the rigor, the reading, the writing I was not as prepared for the first year. I didn't have the study skills. I come from a high school where you were encouraged to do as well as you could, and the teachers taught us to the best of their abilities, but it's a different experience when you think about the resource contexts of schools around the country, which is one of the things I learned being an admission officer that we were recruiting from diamonds in the rough from the most gritty places in the center cities of the eastern US, to some of the most wealthy and large campuses that looked like universities, you know, boarding schools and day schools around the country.

And so, when I saw that research, just the spectrum of resource context, [00:15:00] well I come from somewhere closer to probably the lower decile in the Brown population. And I had wonderful teachers who were committed. My parents are educators. I was not first-generation at all, but I realized that the amount of exposure to different kinds of pedagogy to, you know, some kids came to school – their teachers have Ph.Ds. They were travelers all over the world; they read much more than kids in Mississippi, where our schools were de facto segregated.

And so I came out of that context. It had shaped me tremendously to be prepared to have the determination and the fortitude to endure that first year. By my senior year, I was fine, but the first year I had to acquire the study skills to really be able to keep up with all the reading and the writing, because that was the biggest challenge. And also, those problem sets in applied math 33 and 34. (laughter) So, you know, [00:16:00] and I would be burning the midnight oil all the time trying to get those problem sets done.

But I tell that story all the time, because I don't think that we can fully appreciate the investment Brown has put in, and the capital that's been developed in people across the classes who come from such disparate educational context. And, that's what makes Brown beautiful to me too, because it does at least profess to have that commitment. There are not as many of us as there could be, but if Brown hadn't taken a chance on me, I would not be where I am today; I'm fairly certain of that.

WP: Never mind where you're going next.

PC: Never mind where I'm going next.

SB: I remember having, just noticing how in terms of time management, how much freedom there was here compared to high school, and what a relief it was, right, but also that it required, you know, study skills. And I was [00:17:00] on the crew team, so I was managing the practices and all of that. And I remember something that they, for a lot of us rowers, or a lot of us athletes, we had to take, there was like a writing course we were required to take, and being annoyed by that. "Why do I have to take this?" And the rumor kind of going around, oh, it's because, you know, you're an athlete, or whatever, and that, you know, it was edgy, right? And I probably did need that writing course. You know, it was a great course, but just that I was, you know, you're not as prepared as some of your peers, so you must take this writing class, was an interesting thing.

PC: I think they looked at our writing samples from our essays to determine, because I got that letter too. (laughter) Do you remember, we had to take a test? Like, if you were selected, then there was a writing exam that we had to take first year, and then they would place you, depending on where they – that's how they assess the writing. Yeah, that's what I vaguely recall, [00:18:00] so I remember there was an English 1, and an English 2, or something like that. And then there were sections; I had a section on Hawaii, so I learned all about, you know, Hawaiian culture or politics.

But, it was great, because like I said, back then you didn't have the accountabilities system that you have for public schools today. And so we weren't forced to write as much in

high school, and this really helped me, I think, prepare for the writing. By senior year, I was ready. By senior year, I could see the different from freshman year, yeah.

But so, I did it too, and I wasn't an athlete. I tried crew, by the way, and I failed. I wanted to do here.

PB: I was in that English class also. But it was good, because it was really the first chance I had to be out of your comfort zone, because, you know, you excelled in high school, and it was the first opportunity to say, wait a second, some things are not like what I thought it was, so to be able to get out of your comfort zone and grow from it, [00:19:00] it was really the first class here that helped me take that step, and that's huge for learning.

WP: That's a good way to look at it. I'm curious how the academics compared to Jakarta.

TC: It's different. I think that, based on the spectrum you were talking about, Prudence, the high school I went to that I was really privileged and blessed to go to was, incredible education outside the classroom but also inside the classroom. And I had a lot of teachers in high school who had been professors, and really wanted to be there. There was also a very tight-knit community, so I think I gravitated towards that viscerally, whatever that was here. So I don't remember having a lot of problems academically the first and second years. I think it was around the third year where the burden of life and extracurricular activities, and learning outside of the classroom, all that tradeoff and time management came in, and just the reality of life, what are you going to do with it? And everything else going on with your friends, and the things that matter to you.

So, that's what I [00:20:00] really remembered, that the academics were fun. Honestly, I got to sleep in a lot more than I ever did in high school. (laughter) And after the first semester, I figured out that I shouldn't take that 9 a.m. sociology class. In fact, there was an 11 AM, something else I could trade up, so I was able to balance that aspect of my life. (laughs)

WP: What did you end up doing after Brown?

TC: What did I do after Brown? I actually worked at Brown for a couple of years. I was in the Office of International Programs, so study abroad. And then I went to graduate school for international affairs.

WP: Where?

TC: Georgetown.

WP: Okay, and where are you now?

TC: I'm actually in the Bay Area working at Visa doing global payments. So it's not all connected; there is a bunch of stuff in there, of course, my resume, it's like, only makes sense to me. (laughter)

WP: It's all connected in the wonderful package that is you. Well, you were talking about extracurriculars, and we've talked about crew a little bit. Anybody else participate in any [00:21:00] clubs, or sports, or sanctioned or unsanctioned extracurricular activities?

PB: Yeah, I was very fortunate. I was able to be part of the women's basketball program here at Brown, but that was tremendous, in terms of affecting me and then my career after Brown. But I have to say one of the biggest things that I was involved with here at Brown was our resident counselor, head counselor, area supervisor program that is just amazing. The leadership skills that, a Robin Rose was delivered to us, a MaryLou McMillan delivered to us, or Carla Hansen, or Mary Greineder. I mean, those were, especially the female, those were incredible skills to have to develop as a woman and as a leader to get while in college. And so I'd say that was one of the most important aspects of growing outside the classroom for me.

PC: So I – Wow, the [00:22:00] kind of consciousness building that I acquired here is amazing. It was just, my political consciousness. I was an MPC/WPC, and I was also the African American programmer at what was then called the Third World Center. I didn't realize its name had changed. (laughs) And I was quite active in a number of the kind of organizations on

campus, some of that acting and theater, did some theater activism, and some of the work involved in protest. I remember doing a lot of spoken word, doing some of the campus mobilizations in the early '90s, late '80s. So that, and being involved in those things was really phenomenal for me.

I think those things also helped to direct me towards the path of becoming a sociologist, the thinking about the forces in the society that kind of make us who we are, [00:23:00] kind of reproduce the very kind of patterns that we see in our lives. And that came from my experiences at Brown. It was the first time, understanding I grew up in the de facto segregated south in the Mississippi Delta, and also in Jackson, Mississippi, I had never gone to school, with the exception of two or three maybe very poor white students, I hadn't gone to school with white students. I remember one Asian student in my school, and no Latino students. So this was the most diverse environment I'd ever been in. I didn't grow up in a place where we talked about gender equality to the extent that we talked about it here on campus, and certainly not poverty and class inequality, social stratification. What I experienced here, but also what other people brought to the conversations and in the classrooms, and in our, you know, staying up late at night, and my roommate being so different from me, and all of that, just really opened my mind [00:24:00] and my eyes to the world in a phenomenal way. And so, that's why I say I've learned so much outside of the classroom as well. But those are the things that I did, all of those activities, lots of student activism.

CV: Oh, I was going to build on that. So '87 to '91 was a really interesting time here for three of those social change threads. We were still figuring out the ramifications of Title IX, and those were painful in the boathouse, because I rowed for two years too. I don't know if you've ever thought objectively about the differences in structure –

SB: Yeah, our locker room and their locker room. (laughter)

CV: And then I think it was the gymnastics teams brought suit shortly after we finished, right? So that was very much still – although the federal law was in place, the trickle-down of how that was actually going to impact the female student-athletes at Brown had not yet hit. The Third World Transition Program was part [00:25:00] of how we were welcoming students to campus.

And that was very – as a white person from a privileged background, that was a very interesting way to meet the school because white kids came after, and wow, okay? The students have already settled, they've already picked their side of the room. They already know each other. There was that real experience of disenfranchisement, and it took a while to realize what a gift that was to me, to be like, get in line. You know, like you get to go first here. Get in line. And so I worked with both Pam and Pru in the Res Life programs, and trying to help students make that adjustment to Brown life, and to real experiences of diversity in ways that were healthy and positive, and so that work of how do you articulate that; how do you teach someone that it's good to be uncomfortable, that that's what you came here for? Don't shut down at that.

And then, while we were here was the publication of "Not Guilty", [00:26:00] and the sense that were ready to start undertaking discussions of GLBT, civil rights on campus and off, very difficult time because of the early AIDS epidemic and the ramifications of that. So I felt like in terms of both, all three, gender, race, and sexual orientation, we were learning how to talk, not just to think, but also to kind of talk and help others learn, and I'm not surprised that we ended up – the three of us at least have ended up in education, because that meta-cognitive work. And how do I think about this? How am I feeling about this? How were other people feeling about this? But that was very explicitly part of that co-curricular experience here.

PC: Test variables.

CV: That was rich, that was a rich part of it for sure.

WP: Well, I was just going to ask about activism on campus (laughter) and sort of the political atmosphere and activities that you may have participated in, or that just sort of [00:27:00] were formative in some way during your years here.

PC: Well you know, one of the things that I'm reflecting on, I have to give a talk tonight at the Onyx dinner, and thinking about what students are asking for this year, and the demands, and how it's re-emergent. History repeats itself, right? What the students are demanding today are no different from what we were demanding 29 years ago, 27 years ago. We're in a different cultural moment now where I think they've pushed the baton a little bit farther away in terms of progress

because, or shall I say, closer, because of the social media and the linkages across campuses around the country. Now, you know, it's a very fraught ideological issue of what we were talking about, but I remember being a part of the conversations in the 1980s of some of the very things. We were asking [00:28:00] for, you know, stronger representation in curriculum. We were asking for more faculty of color.

The reason I became a university professor is because I didn't have any professors who looked like me, and I wanted to be a model. I think I had one, Dorothy Denniston in English, one African American woman. And then there's Anani Dzidzienyo in Africana Studies, but I didn't really – I felt like, you know, it wasn't so much, there is – psychological studies show that students do well if they feel like they belong, and part of belonging is feeling like you're represented deeply, not just nominally, in an institution. And so I think we needed that. We needed to feel like this was really home. We didn't want to just be here as the tokens, and on the margins. We wanted to be centrally and deeply embedded in the university, and I think that's what this generation is also asking for. We're not [00:29:00] visitors. We're not window-dressing so it looks like diversity. We are asking that we're all central players and at the table making decisions sharing resources, sharing the power, etcetera, etcetera.

And so I think that's what we were fighting for in the 1980s. We probably didn't have – certainly didn't have the kind of a cultural power that students have today, I think. And, but I think we helped to lay the foundation in many ways. And we also were engaged in, you know, a lot of the same old people call it "PC debates," but I think we're trying to really parse out why things are problematic, why this feels racist, why this is classist, why this is homophobic, you know, why these things feel discriminatory, and that, what I'm saying, my consciousness was really shaped by those discussions, and I remember the BDH [*Brown Daily Herald*], and lots of the editorials that [would come back?].

CV: Sit-ins.

PC: Yeah, we [00:30:00] had sit-ins. You know, it was just all kinds of things. I remember being a part of a group of students. We all dressed in white, and marched into Leeds Theater to audition for a play, because there had never been a major play at Leeds put on that was written by a playwright of color. There were so few playwrights of color, plays were doing. So we all

auditioned for kind of a main – I can't remember what it was, but it was one role for which we knew we wouldn't get the part, or the role. Most of the people who would have been selected, mostly characters were white. I don't think we were doing nontraditional casting at that time. But about a dozen of us walked into an audition in all-white, and we auditioned for John [Amie?], I remember that. And after, the first play, Aishah Rahman, who has since passed away, her play was put on as one of the main plays for Leeds, I think that following year or so. So that was [00:31:00] part of the work that I was doing, and it was bringing together also the things that I was interested in, like acting, you know. So yeah.

WP: You mentioned a sit-in. What was the sit-in about?

CV: I don't remember. But we –

PC: University Hall?

CV: Yeah, we were here before need-blind admission. I think –

SB: There was a lot of discussion about that, about financial aid.

PC: That was Class of '92, where 250-plus were arrested I believe. You have to talk about that next year. (laughter)

CV: I stayed to do my masters, did my first master's degree here, so I was here until the spring of '92, so.

PC: Yeah, I can't remember what that – I remember like protesting P.J. O'Rourke back in the day, my freshman year. Do you remember when he came to campus? He was always so controversial. There was a sit-in in the president's office or something.

SB: And then there was the "Take Back the Night" march.

PC: That's right, [00:32:00] that's right.

SB: I remember that being a really big deal, and feeling, you know, having previously feeling totally safe, and then, oh, not safe, and negotiating and learning what that feels like, and how – feel safe again, and that was –

PB: Wasn't there an issue, I vaguely remember our junior or senior year with the lists that went up in the bathroom?

SB: Yes, the lists in the bathroom.

PB: Yes, yes, that's right.

CV: Because one of our fellow RAs, (inaudible) was accused.

PC: And they were disclosing names on the bathroom walls.

CV: And accusing people of being rapists, inside the stalls in marker inside the female bathrooms. Wow, that was something we were really not – we did not know how to talk about that, and think about that. And it was the same year as Clarence Thomas' –

PC: Anita Hill.

CV: – and Anita Hill, the Clarence Thomas's nomination. So that question of believing [00:33:00] people who were accusing, and in one case, the accused was a colleague and friend of Pam and mine, so that was a very hard time, because he had no, or didn't know who had accused him or what, from what he could tell or share with us, he seemed unaware of who was accusing him or why. So it was a tough – it was hard.

WP: And what became of that?

PB: I believe they had an appearance on the Donahue Show? (laughter)

CV: We did get some more national notoriety.

PB: For some reason (inaudible) some national attention on that.

CV: That, and some of the Brown students working their way through school by doing exotic dancing.

PB: Oh, was that before (inaudible)

CV: And during yeah.

PB: And during. And after – (inaudible)

CV: It's good work. It's after class, so. (laughter) [00:34:00] What else? The cyanide pills were right before we came to the campus, right?

WP: That was before.

CV: That was probably notoriety of the place.

WP: And the prostitution ring was before you.

CV: Yes, just before.

PB: Dear Old Brown. A lot going on.

CV: Actually, it wasn't anywhere near as wacky as its reputation. (laughter)

PB: I actually considered that. I was like, is it as crazy as it's, like, portrayed? I remember asking my sister that, and she was like, no, that's like the anomaly case that just gets national –

SB: And now I remember, that was appealing, right? Because I was from a very conservative white Italian Connecticut, and to go someplace that was like radical – (laughter)

PC: And that was always the amusing thing when you would go out in the rest of the world and you'd hear about the impression of Brown from other students. I have a colleague, very well-known colleague. He just always talks about how Brown at that time [00:35:00] just had a wacky upheaval. So, I was fine – it was for the adventurous. It was for – you know, it was a vibrant, colorful place.

CV: The most liberal of the Ivies.

PC: That's right, the most liberal.

CV: There was no ROTC on campus at that time.

WP: Is there now?

CV: It looks like it.

WP: There is now, isn't there?

CV: There was something in today's bulletin about celebrating that aspect as well, so I'm guessing that there is.

PC: I'm sorry, what are we talking about?

CV: The ROTC –

PC: Oh, the ROTC, ROTC, okay.

CV: They were off-campus. There were concerns about CIA recruiting on campus.

WP: There was somebody who had been recruited in the earlier oral history, who then went on to train other spies. And she had to get a release to –

CV: To talk to you.

WP: – tell us. (laughter) (inaudible) [00:36:00]

CV: A lot different. They did not approach me. (laughter) Absolutely no poker face. (laughter)

WP: Is there anything about your time at Brown that you would change?

SB: I would have done something different with my course choices. I loved the idea that there was no core curriculum, but I probably would have been better off having made different decisions. Right, like I felt I took classes all over the place and didn't develop, you know, courses that would have been more part of my heart, for example. Like when I got – I was like, oh, I should have taken more art history classes. Whoops, what was I doing instead? Well I did Bio 1, I did all these things that like didn't connect.

So I wish that I had had better advising sort of freshman year, and then advising structure as I remember it, it was through your interesting course that you took, [00:37:00] right? So there was like, so I took "Physics for Poets." Like, that had nothing to do with like, anything, right? And I didn't connect with that particular professor. And so, I didn't feel like I got to it. So then my parents would say, my dad would say, "Well, why don't you take Chinese history?" Okay, I'll take Chinese history. (laughter) So, that's the only thing.

And what ended up is I ended up with an Ed. Studies degree, because when I finally did get some good advising, they looked, oh, you have all – you're a generalist, right? So elementary education, that would be great for you. So I was able to make something coherent.

But I think I would have made different choices had, again, I had had a different advising. What about you guys?

PC: I remember coming back at our tenth, I believe, our tenth reunion, and expressing some remorse that I hadn't done something, and then Janet Cooper Nelson, who's the University Chaplain said to me, "If you had done things differently, [00:38:00] you wouldn't be who you are today." And, so that's what I use to remind myself. I mean, I took all those courses too. I mean, I was – SEB, everybody else says "BS," in Applied Math Econ, and I remember there were like 32 credits, a lot of credits for that degree. So I was happy to take other things, but when I look back over it, if I hadn't taken them then, I probably would never have been exposed to Japanese Comparative Literature, A History of Vietnam, you know, Bio. – I mean, like that, I think, is what a liberal arts education is truly about. So that's, so now I appreciate it. I wish I had taken some courses in some other departments. But you know, like I never took a sociology course here. And I'm a sociologist. (laughter) Like, isn't that wacky? I'm a sociologist, but hey, it was for later. And so thank you, Brown, for what you gave me, but I guess you wouldn't be – if you're happy now, it worked out.

SB: Exactly, [00:39:00] and an idea of the liberal arts, which I think is really on a big decline, you think, from what you've – and I keep finding myself, because in my institution, we're a small institution, and we have professional schools. We have a school of education, a school of nursing, and then kind of an arts and humanities. And that school of education is sort of being, it threatens the liberal arts, right? And so I'm constantly trying to articulate, and we talk about the general curriculum there, and I keep wanting it to look more like this one. Right, like give the students more choice. Give the students more choice. Because I did love that aspect, so thank you for, yeah.

PB: But I think also, because I was like you. I took some of those courses in the pre-med route. But then, there was an awful lot of confidence when I was able to say, you know what, that's just not me. So I think the experience of taking those classes and realizing that's not me was a huge [00:40:00] bonus that gave me going forward in any other area. One of my favorite things was actually, every summer I would go over with my dad the courses that were offered at Brown.

Because he loved it, just seeing the variety of courses that were offered, and getting his perspective, but also me sharing with him what I thought was really neat. And him kind of pushing me and saying, “Hey, why do you like that?” And that made me think more, so I thought there was a tremendous learning opportunity being able to pick our courses.

WP: Did any of you have sort of specific favorite spots on campus that are still there today, or maybe not the same, or gone altogether? Any sort of that geographic centering?

SB: I really associate with the freshman unit, right? Because I was in Emery-Woolley, and we were just walking up Meeting Street [00:41:00] – the Meeting Street Café is right there. And then I could see like, you know, those really strong memories of going to the Gate, right?

PC: With that pizza.

SB: Yes. (laughter) Are they even still here?

PC: What about ECDC?

SB: And ECDC.

PC: With the chicken sandwich? I remember – (laughter) ECDC, it’s not here.

SB: ECDC’s not here?

PC: But also, there was a theater space over there too.

SB: Yes, there was a theater space.

PC: Yeah, those were the days. It was dark and grungy in the ECDC, wasn’t it?

SB: And it was so far! (laughter)

PC: But it would be open! If you wanted something late, I think the ECDC may have been –

WP: I think it was open until midnight?

PC: Yeah, something like that. You'd have to trek if you wanted some food. Yeah, that's funny.

SB: We were commenting today –

PC: And [foam?] Night [00:42:00], of course. I loved it (inaudible)

SB: The campus looks smaller, right, in a kind of nice, cozy way, but it felt bigger then, right?

PC: That's true. Now, what happened to our mailboxes?

SB: Oh right, do you see at the bookstore they were selling them?

WP: They're coin banks now, right?

SB: Yeah.

TC: I'm sorry, they were selling mailboxes?

SB: Yes, they redid Faunce House. They took out the mailboxes, right, and they've got them so that they're like, you know, these little boxes that you can put coins in. They're like \$99. A nice idea, but not for \$99.

PC: I can't even remember what mine was, but, yeah, so I know something happened.

SB: So what have they put there instead? I guess people don't need mailboxes anymore, or –

WP: I don't – I thought they had some less interesting, more conventional, looking like – post office. But yeah, I mean, I know [00:43:00] a student that graduated five years ago pretty well. If I mailed anything to her on campus as a special surprise, I had to let her know to go check her mailbox, because it just wasn't the thing that it had that.

PC: I mean, that's the thing, when we were here, email, it was before email, before cell phones, smart, before internet. Wow, I know, we wrote letters. (laughter)

WP: Did you all have write-on wipe-off memo boards on your dorms?

F: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

PC: Yes, exactly.

SB: And you really needed to rely on that to meet with people. We were just talking today, because one of our friends lives in Scotland, and she's here for a reunion, and she doesn't have international roaming on her phone. So you can't text her. So we have to, okay, let's meet at around this time at this place. Which is exactly what we used to do.

The other thing that I've been thinking is, you know, because we didn't have the social media [00:44:00] or the texting or anything, I wonder if we talked more. Right, I'm wondering how, I look at my college students now, and you know, they're waiting for class, and they're not talking; they're texting, exactly.

PB: Well I think the big time was after like 10:30 at night in the dorms. Like, I was in Emery-Wooley my first year or second year, and I just remember everybody kind of hanging out in the hallway just talking at night. So, it was a huge aspect.

SB: Yeah, and that's where we worked through a lot of these issues, right?

PC: Absolutely. And it was civil. I think we learned the lessons of civility, and learned how to listen. Brown was good about that. The WPC program, the RC program, the MPC program, I

think we really were careful about making sure we made these (inaudible) safe spaces, at least that's what I remember my units, most of us, to make those safe spaces.

WP: And I'm just going to ask you say what those acronyms are, because 20 years from now, they might not exist.

PC: Yeah. Well, the Resident [00:45:00] Counselors, the Women's Peer Counselor Program, the Minority Peer Counseling Program, we would get some training together. We had our separate training, but that was also, those were the things that helped me learn how to become a facilitator, to become an active listener, to help facilitate or cultivate that in others, and I remember, I was nervous those first few times because we were also being told, like anticipate big problems, because everybody's coming, you don't know what they're bringing sometimes, and trying to learn how to be a support system for people who were your peers really, but a couple years younger than you. And so I think that is what helped me – helped us. I would attribute some of that help just learn how to listen and talk to each other.

SB: You just reminded me of something that I was involved in, the acronym was RISC, do you remember that? Relationships Involve Skills and Communication. I don't know how I got involved in it. But it was, I became a leader [00:46:00] in that group, and I got to sit with younger, you know, Brown people, and talk about sex and relationships in a way that I would never have imagined that I would have been able to do, and the space for that. And that was just incredible.

CV: Was that the first place we heard the sentence prompt, "I feel when you –"

SB: Yes.

PC: Oh yeah, that's right! (laughter) That's so right!

SB: Yeah, exactly, and then the "born-again virgin" sort of – (laughter) that we talked a lot about.

CV: I think the other thing about being here before the digital era is, and it's something I struggle to articulate to my current students, is the library and the professors and the books were the sources of information. And so information itself was the commodity, was the currency, and now, [00:47:00] information is readily available. So the finding and identifying of information is not the skill that my students come to college for. Because in 0.6 seconds, they can know anything that they want. They don't need to ask, you know, Bill Keach to explain it to them, or find it in the card catalog, or you know, read about it in an article, print version of an article. And so now, when I try to explain something like plagiarism, or why that pushes the buttons of their faculty so much, I have to back up and say, because it used to be really hard to find information. That used to be hours of work to go looking for things. And when, you know, information's available at your fingertips, it's hard to remember that that was what we came to school for, in part, or what we thought we were coming to school for. So the shift now, that no one needs to go to school to get information. They need to go to school to find out what to do with all the information they have, and how to use it, and how to synthesize it, [00:48:00] and how to process it, and how to communicate it. But going to the library really was the place you went to find something out. There was no other place to go.

PC: So Chris, you make me think of something that I think may be a major cultural change from our time to today too. And I've seen a change in the classroom over, however long I've been in the academy. But I also think, Sharon it goes back to something you were saying too, I think what our education at Brown did for us was also appreciate learning for learning's sake in many ways without the social media. Maybe we were pre-professional, like very instrumental about what the degree was going to get us, but I think it's much more stark today. Lots of students come to school to get the degree to get the job to make a lot of money. And I feel like we – you know, the management consulting was a bad thing on campus. [00:49:00] They were coming and recruiting when we were here. I remember that pressure, especially if you were Applied Math Econ., you know, like that's what you were supposed to do, and I ended up hating that.

But, I felt like one of the things this open curriculum did was if you ventured outside of your major, or what you thought you were going to do, it also allowed you to be a little bit more liberated about learning in a way that today, and maybe because the costs are much greater. The

cost of higher education, you know, parents want their students to do a certain thing, and certainly some of that was there too with us, but it's a much more instrumental approach, and I wonder, I can't say anything about the Class of 2016, but I do wonder if we have more freedom, just, to love learning, and just, as opposed to today's cohort, which has to deal in a period where inequality is much more rampant; [00:50:00] there's a lot more competition, a lot more anxiety about what kind of job are we getting, am I going to be in the top 1%, etcetera, etcetera.

CV: Tremendous debt load too. I mean, the average US student leaves school with \$29,000 in debt. And that's an average. But you mentioned the short of shock of junior year. Was that part of what was going on?

TC: No, I think it was just life. I was in a co-ed fraternity. I was at Alpha Delta Phi, which was a huge time investment, and absolutely worth it, because most of us came back minus three or four people this year, so that was a real fulcrum to my life. I was leading the Brown Christian Fellowship Group on campus and trying to do good in the world, and double-majoring, so it was a little bit ridiculous, looking back at it. (laughter)

But it was an amazing experience, and I do think that, reflecting on this, I've got two nieces and a nephew who are, you know, plus or minus college age, so one going into her senior year, and the others who have been through this, really impacted system in California, where they're going [00:51:00] the back route of a junior college, community college, into a four-year, like UC Davis and Berkeley. They're very lucky. And I actually live ten minutes away on the north side from Berkeley, so look me up when you get there. (laughter)

But I wonder provocatively if we're seeing some version of the death of the liberal arts education. Everything that we're talking about here in the digital age, everybody's just doing this, and so they're really not engaging that kind of community, and I think there is something absolutely true to a face-to-face interaction, and where those conversations go. Social media is interesting, absolutely. But it's not the same as sitting in the hallways until 3:00 a.m. And some of those memories that we've been reminiscing through 25 years later, we still remember those conversations at 4:00 a.m., or you know, the next morning, and it was a very, I think, impactful time, not just in society and where we were at, and certainly where the community of Brown was

at, but [00:52:00] individually where we were all coming. And I think that's the genius of the admissions process.

So, I'm a little sad for some of the folks that I know in this generation who aren't getting a four-year on-campus education and experience, because they're just never really even going to know what they missed. (laughs) And so having that six months or a year outside in a start-up environment, as an example, in the Bay Area, it's pretty endemic. It's not the same; it's a completely different thing, but it's not the same as, you know, wondering what pizza to get at 2:00 a.m. (laughs) Or fighting with your roommate about their choice of David Bowie albums they're playing that day. (laughs) So, it's a fundamentally different experience.

And I feel that there's going to be consequences, you know, for, as you're saying, the demise of liberal arts, the kind of talking to each other, and you learn to talk to people, and you learn [00:53:00] to listen, and that generations are coming after us that aren't having those skills developed in that way. It's going to have huge social consequences. I don't know what – you know, they are, but I really worry about that.

PB: And I think you hit on it when you said that there's a love of learning, because it was a love of learning the whole thing. I think now with information being so available, like you kind of find the information that you want and that supports where you're going, and you don't always see the other side. Whereas those 3 a.m. conversations, you saw the other side through that communication, or through love of learning; you're like, whoa, wait, that's a really good argument. How does that affect how I think? So I think that's the concern.

TC: I think even the skill of arguing and negotiating too is really important. It's not the perfect example, but you'll get some of the frankly insipid conversations that people have online; that's not a negotiation [00:54:00] or argument. That's a flame returned by a flame returned by a flame. That's not, I'm really listening to you, or I have a real intent to hear you, and to state my case, and to hear yours. That's not an appreciation of that art and that skill. And, in the context that Pru mentioned of expectation of civility. Yeah, however vehemently we disagreed about which president to vote for, there was an expectation that we could conduct that conversation civilly, and that there would not be long-standing grudges, and that we – yeah, it sounds so cliché, but

that we know how to agree to disagree in ways that didn't feel personal, or vindictive, or at home.

PC: We sound like our parents. (laughter) But it's true, it's developmental. I mean, because there's cultural change every generation. We're exactly a generation ahead now, so it's fascinating to sit here and listen, and to think how things have changed, and to even try to think about [00:55:00] how this generation's going to be talking about what changed for them 25 years from now.

TC: Do you do archive interviews for, say the fifth reunion? That would be an interesting contrast.

WP: Not so far. But as I said, I have connections to the fifth reunion, so my glimpses into that mindset are sometimes refreshing and interesting. Sometimes it's really depressing.

CV: As Brown begins to attend more attention to that first-generation student, this is something that worries me I was telling you, the regional comprehensive that I served is, you know, we really don't want the liberal arts or the arts in general to become the purview of the wealthy, because we have to teach economic self-defense to the first-generation student. So that's part of it, not only like, will it dissipate, or will it become once again sort of just the purview of the elite, that you could do an art history degree, but I have to go get an engineering degree because I have to get right to work [00:56:00] and you can afford to go Europe, right after, you know, like that kind of tracking that I think we managed to avoid. I felt –

PC: We have the same thing. I think that may be a sociological phenomenon that endures in this country because of its economic foundation. I remember explicitly back in the 19 – in our class, lots of us were pre-professional. We thought we had to do engineering, or go into business, or do pre-med, because we were first, or 1.5 generation of college. And I certainly felt that pressure when I applied to Brown, it was about making, college was about making money until I got to Brown and got into the actual culture of learning here. Now, I've seen that over the last 15, 20

years, among all of my students, and elite universities, particularly, where I've [00:57:00] taught. So that may be something that's a little more enduring because of a global phenomenon –

CV: Or a developmental phase. That, as you achieve adulthood, that's an expectation you take on.

PC: What you're saying, that two students who come from very disparate class backgrounds, the wealthier student and more privileged student might have the privilege of thinking about art history, or thinking about – you know, at Stanford, the humanities are dying, because everybody thinks Silicon Valley is the next – it is the new Wall Street, and everyone thinks they have to come out there for engineering or computer science to be in the tech startup. And so, I think many of the universities are struggling, but the students who can go into the humanities, and think, and don't worry about it as much are the more privileged students.

CV: I worry about it. So far it's not. I mean, I have English majors in my office saying, what am I going to do, from all backgrounds. But I do worry that, as you say, like, one, these are communications skills, and two, sort of, [00:58:00] a new version of class warfare that involves, you know, the academy going back to being purview of the elite, and some other sort of practical, or as you said, very instrumental, education becoming a question of economic necessity.

WP: Well I'd like to make an observation, and maybe you won't have a reaction, or maybe you will. But again, as I said, I've been reviewing oral histories with individuals and with groups of many different ages, and it's just particularly striking to me today that even compared to the fiftieth reunion women, who, there were three lawyers in the group, and everybody had very interesting – there was a spy – very interesting professional careers, there was so much content in what they spoke about talking about their relationships in relation to male counterparts [00:59:00], male authority figures, dating, all of that is very much a part of what they were thinking about, everything, and you know, as background, if not the focus. And you haven't talked about that once. And you know, good for us. Maybe we've come that far.

CV: I don't think we've named any man except Dave Zucconi.

WP: I was sitting here thinking, like, it would be great to get on, for the record, like what was dating like in the early '90s at Brown, but, you know, I didn't go here –

PC: I guess it just depends on the makeup of the group in terms of our sexual orientations, or how male-centered our lives are. I mean, yeah, I mean I feel that's very fascinating.

WP: There's just such an agency, [01:00:00] I think, in women of later generations. Thank goodness. I can't imagine being different.

SB: I remember we were spelling womyn with a y, right? (laughter) We were, yup. I also remember that sort of joke going around, at least among the kind of heterosexual population that, there's no dating at Brown. No one dates at Brown. People hook up maybe, but you know, the dating wasn't – the thing is, it was more, you didn't want to miss out, you didn't want to kind of pair up and miss out on other people, right? That's kind of what –

WP: Or the concept compared to, you know, 50s and 60s where you wouldn't go to an event without an escort of the opposite sex, which you know, could be problematic in and of itself, but that was just the expectation. Whether or not there was actual interest there, that's just how you went places.

PB: I think from all of my experiences outside the classroom, in the classroom was all about developing as a person than as a female leader. I mean, it was independence.

PC: There's a strong feminist consciousness here on this campus.

SB: I remember going afterwards to Australia where I was working in a very conservative, with a very conservative sort of small company. We were sailing sailboats, and I was kind of working, one day I was sort of working in the office, and I was asked to, you know, go fetch me a cup of tea, right? I was like, "You can't ask me to –" (laughter) And then quickly realizing that I was

not at Brown anymore. (laughter) (inaudible) in that context where I was at, they absolutely could ask me, and they did. And I went and got the tea. (laughter)

But I also remember that, coming to Brown too, and being, there were lots of, having those kind of [01:02:00] mixed-gender, the co-ed halls, right? And we were hanging out with men, and they were part of all these conversations, right? And then, and that being so comfortable, and you know, being different than high school, where you know, there was more, you didn't, you know, you didn't have men as friends, and really developing those friendships, and a lot of people that we're seeing over reunion are those really good male friends.

PC: That's right, that's right. But that's the funny thing. We talk about "liberating space." I had a flashback memory of a couple in the shower together. Like, I came from conservative south where (laughter) they still had single-sex dorms. I mean, you could have that option here, of course. But you know, I saw couples in the shower together, you know, and it was just like, that's Brown. You know, that's what I remember about Brown, and so it was a different – even our spatial relationship to the other different genders or so, it was different here, right?

[01:03:00]

CV: A co-ed fraternity, right?

TC: It's kind of a joke, but I think in a community that close, we're just people. It's the shocking notion that we're just all people, men, women, whatever, and I remember after my first semester, I think I was going to visit my brother who lived in southern California for Christmas, and I was referring to the cookies that his wife was making, and I called them "gingerbread people." And my brother was like, "gingerbread people?" (laughter) God, it's only been four months and (inaudible) (laughter) That feminist rhetoric was so strong, and we would recommend for each other to read, you know. Incredible.

CV: But wow, I mean I believe more firmly even now than I did then that language and thought are the change agents, you know, and choosing those words, and spelling womyn with a y, we were creating spaces that we hadn't previously [01:04:00] imagined. So my experience was, growing up in a childhood that included a private beach club, and coming back after my first

year at Brown, and going to the club, and realizing that most of the people I was closest to at Brown wouldn't be welcome at the club, and electing to never walk back in. I mean, just, but never, I mean, just, you said "consciousness raising," but that's the version that I knew, was like wow, this norm is not norm anywhere but here, and it's not a norm that I want to reinforce. So I think that gingerbread people, that created a space, right? Like, absolutely, that was far more than (inaudible) or kneejerk; it was a hole in this fabric that we were consciously, and subconsciously dismantling. Whether it existed, or it had been handed to us, we were – [01:05:00] it's a great example.

TC: And 18-year-old brains, I mean, we're just sponges. And I don't remember being a robotic automaton thinking everything made sense. I remember thinking a lot of things didn't make sense actually, when you talk about RISC as an example, and growing up in southern California and then overseas, and as I mentioned, I hadn't been in the US for six, seven years, I came back here, I was actually at Mo-Champ, I think most of us lived in Pembroke it sounds like our first year, and coincidentally, a good friend of my mother, her niece was also on the same hall, and she was also, she was from northern California, but I remember knocking on her door and saying hello, and there were two of us just right down on that strip who were Asian American, and I remember some of our other classmates, again that first week of the unit. The unit was a bunch of great people, very close-knit, but we were coming with our own prejudices and our own prisms and lenses, and I remember people saying, "Wow, they're so integrated." [01:06:00] "What do you mean, we're Californians." (laughter) Are we half the population?

And so I just remember that, and even the TWTP Program, and I think I'd come in for what was called BRIO at the time, the international student orientation that happened right after, maybe overlapped. And I thought, TWTP, I mean that language is so dated and racist in itself. "Third World?" Why third world? These are Americans, right?

So I think that that time was so interesting for us, maybe we're that first generation, or maybe we just like to think so because we're part of it (laughter) divorced from our mothers' experience, divorced from this experience, that maybe somewhat of a unisex experience, one might argue that had that consciousness around that cusp. Interesting times.

PB: But I think it's important it stays with us too, because I think now we go into environments, and we see something that, from our Brown experience, [01:07:00] we say, wait a second. This isn't right, and we now have the skills because of Brown to be able to say, "Hey, let's talk about this," or what can I do to help change the environment, and be a change agent in it? And I think that's tremendous, and a compliment to Brown.

SB: Right. And you talked about that, you know, being "sponges." Another way to look at that that I really like is open to possibilities, right? So somehow, that was a big thing that was fostered, is that you had to be open to all these possibilities. And once you're open, then you're understanding, and that's how you're relating with other people and seeing all these points of view. So there's very much this existential quality that Brown is fostering with that, that you know, is that the liberal arts? Like, what is that, that's really present.

CV: There's this great trend right now, in sort of, I don't know if it's sociology or pop psychology – Pru will tell me, but the art of being wrong, right? Like [01:08:00] deliberately choosing not to be the smartest person in the room. Looking for opportunities to be corrected, to learn more, to change your understanding, and the idea that that's something that now needs to be intentionally articulated, or taught. I mean, Aristotle says, the mark of an educated mind is to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it, right? So, but I think that's part of what getting here at 18 taught me, is like, you are not right. And that's fantastic. You're about to get a lot smarter and a lot more worldly, and a lot more sensitive, and a lot more aware, and to really find joy in that. So the idea now that people need to read a book to convince themselves to seek out those opportunities and awareness, you know, maybe that's for me part of what I feel like I got here. What, okay, 3 a.m. in the hallway, what don't I know?

PC: And what burst, [01:09:00] and what, how it fundamentally changes us, and what we burst out from, so listening to these stories, and I'm also reminded for myself personally, I think I have such a fierce commitment now to radical inclusion in this society because of the kind of people I experienced, the stories I heard, the narratives here at Brown, and you know, even religion, we hadn't talked about religion. I came from a very religious family, and I remember going back after freshman year, my parents' minister, there was a Sunday school class, and they were talking

about something and the people who were not Christians, and I remember asking the minister, “So you know, I have all these friends at college. They’re not Christian. They’re really good people. Some of them are agnostic, some of them atheist, some of them Muslim, whatever, and there’s no way I’m going to believe that they’re going to hell.” [01:10:00] And he got really angry at me for bringing that home, and that’s the day he lost me. And so, and I tell this parents this story all the time, it’s not – I lost hold of religiosity, not spirituality per se, but religiosity and institutionalized religion because I refused to believe that most of the people in this world were not special because they weren’t Christian.

And that’s something that I gather just, which is why segregation is so problematic to me, because had I not come to a place like Brown, I would probably not have been able to live amongst these different kinds of people. And I’ll forever be grateful for that experience, for the experiences and the exposure I’ve had here.

WP: Well that’s a super good thought to end on, but if anybody else wants to share, any –

SB: Agree. (laughter)

WP: Well thank you [01:11:00] all for coming. I know there are lots of other tempting activities during your reunion weekend, but I think it’s incredibly important to get these stories recorded, and for yourselves, for future generations, and for researchers too.

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